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The Cupboard

It was raining, loud pitter patter can be heard by Harry through the confines of his cupboard. Uncle Vernon had just locked him in for burning the eggs he was ordered to fry. He curled into himself in his cupboard, arms sore and back hurting, knowing that he wouldn't be let out in a long time.

The last time Harry had been locked in his cupboard was when he accidentally broke a plate while he was trying to take it from the kitchen counter to the dining table for his relatives. Harry knew he would be in big trouble the moment he felt the white ceramic plate slipping off his fingers, crashing onto the hard floor, shattering into pieces instantly with an echoing 'PANG!'.

Harry had tried to clean up the mess by picking up the shards of the floor, praying that they might not have heard it. His prayers were unheard though as Aunt Petunia's voice sounded behind him.

"You utterly worthless and useless freak!" she bellowed.

"How dare you break my possessions after I have so kindly let you stay in my home!"

"H-Hawwy s-s-sowwy" Harry muttered as he faced the wrath of his aunt landing sharp smacks on his back, tears threatened to fall. But he tried to hold them in. Crying meant more pain. He didn't want that.

"Don't you dare talk back to me you freak!"

Harry kept quiet throughout his punishment, well, as quiet as he could be anyway, waiting for the beating to stop. A hand gripped the collar of his tattered shirt and threw him forcefully into his cupboard to repent for his actions. He had stayed in there for almost a week.

Now, Harry was stuck in his cupboard with only a small piece of

bread that he had snuck into his cupboard from the kitchen counter. No escape, no water, nothing to do but stare solemnly at the small wooden door, wondering when he would be released.

The cupboard was dark, had no openings but a few minuscule gaps for fresh air to come in. Harry had barely any possessions. He has an old tattered shirt that was once his cousin Dudley's. It was huge, engulfing his small frame when he wore it. But it was the best he had for clothing. A worn out pen for when he had to do Dudley's homework laid in the corner of the cupboard above a dirty old blanket and that was it.

Only having been let out twice to go to the bathroom after several days in his cupboard, he thought 'Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! Make Uncle Vernon angry! No go out of cupboard anymore.' The thought made Harry start to cry, several tears rolled down his wounded cheeks. He cried softly, afraid that his relatives would hear him and punish him more.

Harry had already gotten yelled at and smacked for burning their breakfast, he didn't need anymore pain. Every time he cried, he wished that someday, he might be comforted by someone like Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon does for their precious Dudley when he was upset. He hoped for someone to care, to love him like they're supposed to. But who was he kidding, he's a worthless freak that did freaky things and can't even do his chores correctly. Nobody would want him anyway. The thought stayed with him until he cried himself to sleep.

<Severus>
Severus walked down the halls of Hogwarts towards the Headmaster's office, wondering why he would need him to be there at such an hour. With his long, black robes billowing behind him as he walked, he arrived at the entrance of Dumbledore's office. Irritatingly hissed the words, "Sherbet lemon," to the gargoyle that allowed him entrance to the office.

He could not comprehend why the Headmaster would have such a password for his office. Entering, he saw Dumbledore sitting on his chair, sipping tea as he asked Severus,

"Would you care for a lemon drop?" Dumbledore inquired.

"No." Severus replied.

"How about some tea then?" Dumbledore asked again.

"No. Now, would you please get to the reason that you would require me in your office at this hour?"

"Very well. I would like to ask you for a little favour my boy." Dumbledore's eyes twinkled.

"And what would the favour be Headmaster?" Severus asked. This was rather unusual for the Headmaster to ask him for favours. He spent most days in his potions lab creating potions and drawing out lesson plans.

"This is something I can only trust you with Severus." Dumbledore's eyes twinkled, dangerously brighter than before. That was not a good sign for Severus.

"I would like you to check on Harry at the Dursley's. It has been known to me that there has been some problems regarding Harry." The Headmaster continued. Severus felt that this was ridiculous. *Him?* Checking on the Potter spawn? Has the Headmaster finally gone mad?

Severus voiced his exact thoughts towards Dumbledore. "Have you finally gone mad Headmaster? You want *me* to check on the brat? This is a ludicrous idea. I'm not doing it, find someone else."

"Severus, my boy, you are the only one I trust with this task."

"You seriously want *me*, someone who barely tolerates children, let alone 4 year olds, *especially* Potter's spawn, to check on Potter!? Perhaps you should ask Minerva or Poppy." Severus suggested.

"I do think that this it is a wonderful idea for you to check on Harry. Didn't you make a promise to Lily? It would be good to keep that promise wouldn't it? You just have to check on him Severus, there might not even be a need to interfere."

It's always Lily. Bringing out the sore spots in Severus's heart, used as bait, a threat to do what the Headmaster wants. Severus inwardly sighed in frustration, this was not how he intended to spend his Saturday night.

Severus had wanted to have a calm, peaceful and quiet time in his potions lab, restocking his potions. But no, he had to be here, in the Headmaster's office, telling the Headmaster that no, he would not like to check on Potter thank you very much.

"Why would a spoiled brat like him need to be checked on anyway, he is probably just seeking attention. That insufferable brat." Severus said. 'What a waste of my time' he thought.

"Don't be too quick to judge my boy. Im sure you will find out the answers when you carry out the task."

"Fine." Severus spat. He growled in anger. How wonderful, he now had one more thing to do, adding to his long list of tasks. He went back to his quarters and started brewing multiple potions, to distract himself from the fact that *he* had to go to Privet Drive the next morning. What a pain.

Realisation

Sunlight shone through the windows as Severus woke up. He had to go to Number 4 Privet Drive today to check on bloody Potter. Why had he even agreed to do this? He knew the reason but would not like to admit that Lily had such an influence on him.

He went to freshen up, taking a quick shower and proceeded to put on the most appropriate muggle outfit for the occasion. Dressed in a simple white button up shirt, long black pants and black dress shoes, he walk outside of Hogwarts, ready to apparate somewhere near the house so that he could fulfil his task.

Apparating, he arrived at the street that Potter was located at. He started walking towards his destination, dress shoes clacking on the concrete floor as he reached the entrance of the Dursley house that was oddly silent. But something filled his ears before he could even knock on the door, the sounds of heart wrenching cries.

Although there was no physical change in expression on Severus's face, he could not help but wonder, what happened? Despite what many think if they had not known the Potion Master well, he was not completely heartless. The cries did not stop after the few seconds he lingered at the front door.

These were no 'I fell down and it hurts' cries or 'I want this and you're not giving it to me' cries but loud emotionally stirring sobs. He finally knocked on the door after he gathered his thoughts. No one answered. Knocking a few more times, still no one had answered.

<Harry>
Harry had been in the cupboard for a week now and the house had become strangely quiet. No sounds of cartoons playing on the television or sounds of toys being played with. He had already ran out of bread after a few days and the only water he had was when he was let out to use the loo.

The hunger, thirst and pain from untreated wounds were too much for him to bare as he let out a few sobs, promptly followed by heart wrenching cries. He couldn't stop himself after the first sob came out. He cried so hard that he hadn't even noticed the knocks on the door that were starting to get desperate.

<Severus>
After the first couple of knocks that went unanswered, he half muttered half snapped an "Alohomora." He was getting impatient the longer his knocks were met with no response. As he stepped inside, he found himself in an empty house, at least it was what it had seemed like. The Dursleys were not here. Knowing that someone is still crying somewhere, he looked around.

The rooms were empty, the kitchen was empty, the living room was, you guessed it, empty. Trying to follow the sound of the cries, it was alarming when he found out that it became the loudest when he had went near a cupboard under the stairs.

While walking towards the tiny cupboard, he steeled himself, mentally preparing himself for the sights he might see before him. He had his suspicions but hoped that they were untrue.

He knelt down on one knee as he unlocked the doors of the cupboard. 'Who the bloody hell had locked someone in the cupboard!' he thought seething. Opening the cupboard, the sight was one to behold. Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, Saviour of the wizarding world was currently pressed against the furthest corner of the cupboard, trying to hide himself from Severus as he cried, wounds visible on all parts of his body.

<Harry>
Harry heard knocking coming from the front door after he had broken down in tears a while ago. 'Who's here? He's going to hurt Harry!" were the only thoughts running through his small brain as he tried to push himself further away from his cupboard's locked door, preparing himself for the inevitable smacking he had earned himself for not being able to control his emotions.

<Severus>
Severus's thoughts were running wild even though there was no

telltale sign of his brain conjuring assumptions as he looked at Potter, the son of his nemesis, James Potter and someone he truly had cared for, Lily Evans. Potter was a mess. Emotionally and physically.

Had those horrid muggles done this to him? Treatment like this was definitely inexcusable, even for Potter. He tried to be as gentle and least intimidating as he could when he said,

"Potter?" He had not had it in himself to use his first name, yet.

<Harry>
"N-no huwt p-pwease! Hawwy s-sowwy!" Harry immediately forced out. Hoping that his plea might be effective against the man in front of him. He knew it wasn't going to work despite everything, it never worked. He was just a freak nobody wanted or cared about, who was he to ask for what *he* wanted.

Severus took note that Harry's speech was atrocious. He had the speaking skills of a baby. Hadn't he already turned 4 at this point? The treatment that Harry has undergone had most definitely stunted his development.

However, the man hadn't struck him or yelled at him after his plea. He merely said gently,
"It's alright. I'm not going hurt you child." That was surprising, this has never happened before. Even the seemingly nice Aunt Marge had not spoken to him in this way. She had been alright until she smacked him across the face when he had said that he was hungry. Telling him that he was a waste of resources. He had learned to never trust 'nice' people ever again.

"No huwt Hawwy?" Harry asked once again, unsure and still crying. Barely holding himself together.

"I'm not going to hurt you Harry." The name just slipped out although he had not intended for it to.

"R-reawwy?" Harry asked while sobs are still escaping from his mouth, shocked at the responses from the man.

"Yes, really." Severus could tell that if he doesn't get Harry --when had Potter become Harry?-- never mind that, to trust him, he might just pass out at any moment due to blood loss from the deep wounds.

"Harry, are you hungry?" He tried, he had to get him out from the cupboard somehow.

"Mhm. H-hawwy h-hungwy." Harry replied softly, perhaps if it was slightly softer, it wouldn't have been heard at all. What if this was a trick to smack him when the facade ended? But the man seemed nice, he felt like the man was an oddly comforting presence even though he was definitely a stranger. Maybe Harry could trust him, just maybe.

"Can I hold you child? We can go get some food for you. How does that sound?" Severus could see the apprehension in Harry's eyes, unsure if he could be trusted or not. He never thought he would be in the position to ask if he could carry James Potter's child. What a turn of events.

Harry had never experienced someone holding him before but he had seen Dudley getting picked up by Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon. It seemed so nice, being embraced by someone that loves you. Here the man was, asking for permission for him to carry Harry.

"H-hawwy go wif y-you?"

"Yes. I'll carry you and we'll go get some food. You are hungry aren't you?" Severus replied.

Harry slowly nodded his head, scared that too much movement would cause the man to be angry at him. The man reached out his arms and carefully lifted Harry from under his arms and set him onto his hip, trying not to disturb his injuries. Harry cautiously laid his head on the man's shoulder, he always wanted to do this but nobody had wanted to interact with him let alone carry him in their arms. The man hadn't said anything about it even after standing up.

<Severus>

Severus stood up with Harry who had laid his head on his shoulder with caution, almost expecting him to yell at him or beat him. "It's ok Harry." He assured the child. If the child wanted comfort, he wasn't going to deny him the simple affection he probably never had.

Harry seemed to relax and completely let his head rest on Severus's shoulders without fear after the reassurance. Realising that his relatives were not in the house, he even stopped crying and started falling asleep as Severus went to a secluded area to apparate back to Hogwarts' entrance. He had much to discuss with the Headmaster after this.

Problems

Severus apparated to the Hogwarts entrance holding Harry with one arm and headed straight to the infirmary. He did not have time to spare to change out of the outrageous muggle clothing he was wearing.

"Poppy!" The medi-witch came out of her quarters and saw the unusual and heartbreaking sight in front of her, Severus carrying *Harry Potter* while Harry had both his arms wrapped around Severus's neck and head resting on Severus's shoulders, sleeping peacefully. She would have thought it was absolutely adorable if she had not seen the deep cuts and marks on the small body.

"What happened? Why is Harry injured so badly?" Poppy was concerned, was this what she thought it was? There was no denying it from what she had seen. Harry Potter was abused by his relatives.

"Run a full check up Poppy, he's been locked in a cupboard and beaten by his relatives. And starved too from what I could inquire." Severus slowly and carefully went to one of the beds and laid the sleeping Harry down. "Dobby!" Severus said. A small 'pop' was heard and the house elf appeared. "Please prepare some food that a toddler would like to eat and bring it here." Severus commanded. "Yes, Master Severus. I is go make food." Dobby then went to prepare the request.

Poppy casted a quick spell to see the extent of Harry's injuries. What was written on the piece of paper almost made her tear up. She felt horrible for Harry. He had multiple broken bones and burns that were untreated; these were just a few. He was also malnourished, dehydrated and basically on the brink of death.

What had those god forsaken muggles done to such a sweet child? Poppy's anger was quickly bubbling. "I'll go inform the Headmaster." Severus said.

"Oh, what a poor child." She would not let this continue no matter

what anyone says. "He is definitely not going back there." Poppy continued. A nod of the head from the Potion Master indicated that he felt the same way. With a few waves of her wand and a few spells, Harry was free of his physical injuries.

Severus was ready to walk out of the infirmary and head straight to the Headmaster's office when he heard sounds from behind him. Grunts could be heard from Harry behind him, trying to sit up but to no avail. Poppy tried to help by reach her hand out to lie him back on the bed but Harry flinched, hard and started physically shaking while his lowered lip wobbled, preparing to sob.

Severus could tell that he was trying holding his emotions in as he bit down on his lip, not too hard to cause bleeding but definitely painful from the looks of it. Harry looked at Severus with pleading eyes, telling him that he was scared and uncomfortable in Poppy's presence and desired comfort.

Harry had barely knew the man but he had known enough that he would be safe around him. A woman was standing beside him as he was lying flat on a bed, the man from earlier standing closer to the door than Harry would have liked. He tried to sit up but the pain was too much and he was too weak.

The woman reached out to him and Harry thought he was going to be punished for being on the bed. Flinching away from the woman, Harry turned to look at the man, 'Hawwy need ask man name.' he thought, he didn't have anything else to call him except 'The man'. He looked at him and tried to ask through telepathy if he could come closer since he couldn't do it himself.

He desired the man's comfort, he wanted the man to hold him again. It was such a blissful experience, the feeling of weightlessness and the warmth of another person's touch and not someone who was about to punish him felt amazing against his cold skin.

Harry dared not to actually ask the man by saying it out loud, that would definitely ruin all the chances he might have had. Not talking was best if he did not want to suffer. The woman noticed his flinch and said, voice soft, "I won't hurt you Harry." It sounded nice but he

couldn't trust it. Aunt Marge had already used this tactic to lure him into having a reason for punishment.

He moved further away from the woman and pressed himself against the backboard, as far as he could go. Harry continued to look at the man, begging for his pleas to be answered.

"Poppy wouldn't hurt you Harry. She's very nice." Severus said in a low soothing voice, but not yet making his way closer, hoping that Harry would start accepting her as safe, if not, this was going to be a long day. Harry was still not convinced however, as could be seen by the tears that were seriously close to falling.

Severus did not have the heart to leave Harry just like that. It looked like a reflection of his own childhood. No happiness, no safety, no comfort. Anyone could strike you at any moment. He went nearer to the edge of the bed, mattress dipping as he sat down.

Harry quickly scooted as close as possible to the man and let go of his hurting lip, craving for the comfort he could provide but he knew that he shouldn't push his luck. He was lucky to have some form of safety to fall back on. That was more than he could ever imagine.

Severus felt the small mass lean on his side, afraid to go any further to sought out comfort. Trying to sooth Harry's nerves, Severus asked, "Can I touch you?" Severus didn't want to scare Harry unnecessarily if he was going to wrap an arm around his small body.

He felt a nod of approval on his side. Carefully, he lifted an arm to wrap around Harry's scarred shoulders. He felt Harry lean back onto his arm that was against the headboard, soaking in the warmth.

He gestured to Poppy for Harry's list of injuries. The length of the paper was alarming.
Poppy got over the slight shock of seeing Severus, the cold dungeon bat as the students refer to him as, willingly comfort a child, a Potter no less and handed the list over.

Severus had anticipated this from when he had first seen Harry but it was slightly worse than he thought. The injuries were extensive and untreated. And they had the nerve to just leave Harry in the house with no one, absolutely nobody! This was the worst case he had seen in a while.

Slytherin had many students, many from an abusive household. From neglect to physical abuse, he has seen it all and even had a first hand experience. But this was extreme. How could he still hate Harry after this? Harry was clearly not a portrayal of his father but a scared and hurt child. He was going to need to reform his opinions.

Determination

Dobby popped back into the infirmary as Severus was reading through Harry's list of injuries with plates of food floating behind him. The smell of sausages, roast beef and mashed potatoes filled the air. The house elf the set all the dishes onto a table near Harry's bed. "I is done with cooking Master Harry's food Master Severus." Dobby stated. "Yes. You may leave and continue with whatever you were doing before." Severus replied.

Harry has never seen so much appetising food before. All he was given were leftover stale bread and expired crackers that Dudley throws at him in his cupboard. Nobody has actually given him real food. The closest he had been was when he was cooking in the kitchen where he failed to sneak half of a pre-boiled egg bought from the convenience store. That had not ended well.

Severus saw the food arriving while Harry was looking at it longingly. He doubts that the Dursley's have ever given him the nutrition he requires judging by Harry's expression and physique. Putting down the piece of paper, he turned towards the table. He was going to hand feed Potter's spawn if necessary. How had it come to this? Wondering if Harry could use utensils, it would make this way simpler, he picked up the bowl of mashed potatoes. Handing Harry a metal spoon, he commanded "Here, eat." while holding up the mashed potatoes for him.

Harry looked at the spoon in confusion and questioning eyes stared back at Severus, seemingly lost on what its purpose was. "Never mind. Give me the spoon child." Harry gave the spoon back to Severus.

Severus spooned a healthy amount of mashed potatoes and held it up to Harry's mouth. After a few seconds of hesitation and a reassurance, Harry slowly opened his mouth and accepted it. They continued this routine until there was no residue of mashed potatoes left in the bowl.

Harry was shocked when he saw the creature pop into existence and disappear leaving food on the table before it left. It was fascinating, like something straight out of a fantasy book. Although he wouldn't know, he had never read one before. It was what Harry imagines them to consist of, dragons, castles, elves and magical things.

Now, Sev'us --He had learned the man's name when the creature had addressed him-- was feeding him spoonfuls of mashed potatoes. He was scared to eat it at first but Sev'us had assured him by saying, "It's for you Harry, you can eat it." The taste of the silky smooth mashed potatoes coated his tongue. It was amazing. Harry had never eaten anything that was as delicious as this before.

The mashed potatoes were devoured quickly and Severus went on to feed Harry some of the other foods on the table. A few sausages later, footsteps were heard before Minerva bursts through the wooden doors of the infirmary, scaring Harry out of his wits as he stared in shock and fear.

"A dramatic entrance much Minerva?" Severus mused, raising his eyebrows slightly to indicate surprise before proceeding to whisper comforting words to Harry who was trying to bury himself closer to Severus's side while shaking in fear after the initial shock.

"No need to worry child, no one will hurt you here." Severus stated with conviction. He was going to make sure that Harry never has to experience that kind of torture ever again.

Minerva stared at the two on the bed. This was a sight to see. Severus in muggle clothing, legs stretching to its full length on the bed with his left arm supporting Harry's shoulders in a secure hold while Harry was practically attached to Severus's side, clutching onto Severus's shirt with a death grip, tears staining the Potion Master's clothes.

Minerva's state astonishment was broken as Poppy said "I know. It's crazy isn't it?" Yeah, she could agree with her on that. The second thing she noticed was the obvious scarring and injuries on Harry's that filled Harry's body. Barely any untouched and mark free skin could be seen. Harry was still so young!

Watching her anger, she controlled herself as best as she could and said somewhat loudly, "I knew Dumbledore shouldn't have sent Harry to those vile muggles! How dare they do this to sweet Harry! Poor thing, he's not even in the double digits yet. I'm going to have a long *chat* with the Headmaster."

Poppy had contacted Minerva when Severus was busy feeding Harry to come over to the infirmary for important business. She had already guessed that Severus would not be out of Harry's bed anytime soon if Harry's actions could be anything to go off of.

Minerva stalked out of the infirmary and was headed to the Headmaster's office. Severus grabbed the glass of chocolate milk that was on the table and nudged Harry gently with his free hand. Harry lifted his head just a tiny bit so he could see Severus, not fully comfortable with getting out of the embrace as he looked at Severus.

Severus pressed the glass onto Harry's lips and tipped it slightly, suggesting that Harry should drink some of the its contents. Sipping a little at a time, the glass was slowly draining. Pulling the glass away when Harry had indicated that he had enough, Severus set it back on the table where the other food resided.

Harry's eyes were struggling to keep itself open. His full stomach, the warmth from Sev'us's body and the comforting hand around his cold body added to his drowsiness, causing him to fall asleep in record time.

Severus glanced at Harry as he was conversing with Poppy about his dunderhead students and noticed that he was sleeping. Harry's head slid onto the bed below Severus's side, Severus's arm trapped under the light weight of Harry's body, his glasses, 'Can it even be considered glasses at this point' he added as an afterthought, falling off of his face.

Severus used his free hand to cast a quick spell to change Harry out of the horrific clothing he was wearing.

Severus then slid his arm out from its place under Harry's sleeping self, careful to not disturb Harry in dreamland. This was probably

the most comfortable sleep the child's had in a long time.

"Call me if I'm needed. I'm retiring back to my quarters." Severus said emotionlessly. Knowing that Minerva was taking care of talking to the Headmaster, Severus walked out of the infirmary still in muggle clothing. Changing out of his horrendous clothes, he started on his brewing again. This was something he definitely did not sign up for when he accepted the favour from Dumbledore. How was he going to ignore Harry now until his schooling starts?

Nightmares

Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia were punishing him again. He had not weeded the garden to their satisfaction. "H-hawwy sowwy. No h-hurt p-pwease!" They didn't listen. "Stop talking boy! This is what freaks deserve for being a nuisance!" Uncle Vernon shouted.

"Hawwy be good! N-n-no hu-urt!" Struggling to get out of their hold unsuccessfully, Uncle Vernon landed smacks across his bottom before Aunt Petunia roughly shoved into the cupboard.

Suddenly, his eyes shot open, surveying his surroundings. It was dark, no light could be seen, not even from the windows and he was on a bed. He then remembered all the events that happened. Sev'us. Where was Sev'us? He really wanted Sev'us right now. He wanted Sev'us to carry him, cuddle him, to hold him in his arms forever. It's scary in here! What if Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia were hiding in the shadows?

But Sev'us probably left him here because he found out what a freak he was and how much trouble he caused. He couldn't help but think of all the moments where Sev'us had been so nice to him. He want him to come back! Curling into himself, he started sobbing, loudly.

Poppy rushed out of her office when she heard the cries coming from Harry's direction. She suspected that he probably had a nightmare. It wasn't uncommon for victims of abuse. Reaching the bed, she saw the pitiful state Harry was in.

Curled into himself where he cried his little eyes out, shirt getting drenched at the same time. He was shivering, either from the cold or the sobbing, she couldn't tell. The small sounds of, "Sev'us." was breaking her heart into pieces. Deciding that calling Severus was a good idea right about now. She floo called him.

Severus was in the middle of brewing a healing potion when his floo rang. "Come through Poppy" he said gruffly, annoyed that he was being disturbed. "Severus, I need you in the infirmary right

now. Harry had a nightmare." Oh, so the Potter brat (he was trying to convince himself that he didn't care about him) was going to indirectly ruin his potion. Great.

"Noted. I'll be a moment." he begrudgingly stood up and poured his unfinished potion into the sink, knowing that it would not be salvageable once he came back. 'What a waste.' he thought.

Entering the infirmary, he looked at Harry who was crying, tears being soaked up by his shirt. The most shocking thing was what Harry was muttering as he bawled, "Sev'us." That tugged at his heart strings a little. Bloody hell! He was turning soft!

Quietly walking towards Harry's shivering form, he asked, voice gentle, "Harry?" he was met with glossy emerald orbs looking up at him. Harry cried a little louder from relief at seeing his saviour before he launched himself at full speed into Severus and wrapped his thin arms around Severus's middle, still standing on the bed.

Mildly surprised, Severus brought a hand to Harry's back and started to awkwardly rub what he hoped were calming circles. Poppy watched the scene unfold with fondness. She never knew that the dour Potion Master had it in him to comfort children after nightmares.

Severus glanced at Poppy, seeing her expression, he scowled, "Poppy, stop what you're thinking of right this instant!" Poppy smirked, "I have no clue what you're talking about Severus." she retaliated. He decided it was best to ignore her for now.

Harry was basking in all the comfort. He never thought that Sev'us was going to come back! He buried his tiny face into Sev'us's clean robes, getting tears and snot all over it. Feeling a burst of courage, he tugged on Sev'us's robe and waited for him to notice.

Severus looked down as he felt a small tug on his robe, Harry hesitantly looked at him with puppy eyes before shyly raising his arms up to him, a universal sign indicating that he wanted to be carried.

Seeing that Severus had not responded immediately to, he put his

arms down dejectedly before leaning closer to Severus, afraid that Severus was going to push him away. If Severus did not want to carry him, he surely didn't want to be in contact with Harry either.

Severus noticed the rapid change of emotion on Harry's face when Severus had been uncertain to carry him. He also felt Harry lean closer to him, almost afraid that he was going to let go.

He stretched out his arms slowly and lifted Harry up who looked at him in surprise before burying his head into the crook of Severus's neck. He feel Poppy smiling behind him. Using his left arm, he wrapped it around Harry's body. He had felt how cold he was when Harry ran into him. Hoping it would warm Harry up, he started rubbing his back similarly to before.

Severus went to sit back on the now clean infirmary bed, and set Harry onto his lap. Wiping the leftover tears leaking from Harry's eyes, Harry placed his head onto his chest. As he was being used as a pillow, Harry's breathing evened out and soon, Harry was asleep again.

Severus fell into deep slumber right after Harry. With Harry still perched on his lap, both of them slept soundly in that position. That was how Dumbledore found them the next morning.

Author's notes:
This is the shortest chapter yet. Really focused on fluff with this one.

Conversations

Dumbledore had quite an enlightening conversation with Minerva. He knew that the Dursley's were not the kindest of people but surely they wouldn't stoop that low, would they?

Minerva had entered his office that afternoon looking furious as if she was going to blow up at any second. "Headmaster, how could you have put Harry with those vile muggles!" she seethed. "I told you they were unfit for the caring of another child besides their own!" she continued.

"Calm yourself Minerva, its Albus and I'm sure they were not that ba-" but before he could finish his sentence, Minerva interrupted him. "Have you seen him *Albus*, the boy was covered in scars, deathly thin and extremely terrified!" she yelled.

"Severus brought Harry to Hogwarts?" he asked in a calm manner. "Yes, he is currently in the infirmary. But Harry will not under any circumstance be brought back to those filthy muggles and I will see to that personally!"

"The blood war-" he was cut off again. "There will be no point of the blood wards if Harry's dead Albus!" she slammed her hand on his desk in rage. "Well, I suppose that is true. Perhaps I should check the condition of the boy myself tomorrow."

"That would be fine." Minerva replied stiffly. With that, she walked out of his office, tad amount of anger flowing out of her in waves.

Meanwhile, in the infirmary, Severus had just woken up. Noticing the unnatural weight, he saw Harry Potter lying on his chest. Right, he had totally forgot about that, wishing that it had been a dream or something.

Quickly realising the uncomfortable position that he was in, he gingerly placed Harry onto the bed and stretched his limbs. His whole body was sore. 'Never am I sleeping like that again.'

While stretching, he barely noticed the Headmaster standing in front of him staring at the sight. Seemingly amazed at how close he had allowed Potter to be around him. "Good morning Severus. I see that you have slept well."

"If well you mean getting a sore back then I suppose I have." Severus snarled. He did not like mornings and definitely not mornings with Potter (he was only going to use his first name when talking for Potter's benefit he decided) on top of him. Although he had been the one to put him there, he could not understand his past self for doing that.

Sure Potter had been a little upset, an understatement, but this was unnecessary, right? Those big green eyes were hard to resist though he was not going to admit that aloud even until his death. He was taking that thought to his grave.

During his insightful thinking, Harry had opened his eyes, woken up by their conversation. Unfamiliar with the bright sunlight, his eyes squinted as he tried to get a good look of who was talking.

He didn't have his glasses however and everything was blurry. Well the glasses didn't help much since they were non-prescription ones but they were something at least. He could see a tall figure that was dressed in black sitting beside him. Sev'us! He stayed! However, he was talking to a man he hasn't seen before.

The man wore bright pink robes and had a long grey beard. He kind of looked like Santa! He had seen pictures of Santa when Aunt Petunia took photos of Dudley sitting on Santa's lap, laughing. They were hung in the living room for them to admire.

Harry didn't have pictures of him anywhere in Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia's house. Why would they even bother putting up pictures of freaks like him on the walls? They didn't even have any.

He didn't think Santa wore pink though. Maybe he was wrong? His relatives always had Dudley write a letter to Santa to ask for what presents he wanted every Christmas but not him. They always told him that they wrote about how he was a freak and a bad boy so he would never get any presents ever.

Seeing 'Santa' in real life made him nervous. He knew about what a bad boy he was and all the freaky things he has done! He subconsciously used his right hand to grip onto Sev'us's black robe, pulling it closer to him.

Noticing that his robe was being pulled, he turned around and saw Harry looking at the Headmaster, afraid of something. Afraid of what, he didn't know. What he did know was the ridiculous robe the Headmaster was wearing. Only he would ever buy something as obnoxious as this. The store must have been ecstatic to be rid of their trash.

"Good morning Potter."

"Mornin' Sev'us." Harry mumbled.

"Ah. Good morning to you too Harry." Dumbledore said brightly.

"Mornin' Santa." he muttered again as he leaned towards Severus, unsure.

"My my, I suppose I do look a lot like him. I've gotten that quite a bit." Dumbledore chuckled.

"Sowwy." He had just called the bearded man Santa and he had been wrong. Oh no! What if he gets angry? Unable to take it anymore, he went with the urge to sit in Sev'us's lap. It was warm, comfortable and safe.

Letting go of the robe, he crawled over with mild difficulty and plopped himself down at his destination, hiding himself in the folds of Sev'us's robe. He was still unused to people he didn't know, but if Sev'us was here, he would be safe, they would be nothing to worry about. Sev'us would protect him.

Severus stared blankly as Potter crawled closer to him before getting up onto his legs and positioning himself onto his lap. He had not thought Potter would do that without prompting or asking. He wanted to shove Potter off right away but refrained. He wasn't going to upset him for no reason, there was no need to hear wailing today.

Poppy had came into the infirmary to check up on Harry when she saw Dumbledore and Severus were there too. She hadn't expected Severus to stay with Harry the whole time, was Harry melting his ice cold heart? Even though she held great respect towards Dumbledore, his choices of outfits were still appalling.

"Good morning Severus, Albus and Harry." Poppy chirped (is this the right word? idk). Several 'Good mornings' and a 'Mornin" were heard.

"What are you doing in the infirmary Albus?" Poppy asked.

"I'm here to visit Harry and see whether he should go back to his family."

Harry turned around slightly to peek at the bearded man, Albus was it? His mind was clouded with fear. 'Was the man going to take him back to his relatives? He liked being with Sev'us though. Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon were scary and mean, he didn't want to go back.' the thought made his eyes water, clinging onto the robe's silky material harder.

Severus seethed. 'How could he still entertained the idea about sending him back! Surely Minerva had informed him about their treatment towards Potter.'

"I can assure you that he is never going back there. There's no need for this." Severus said as he controlled his anger, careful to not scare Potter more with his fury.

"If you say so my boy. Who would be his new guardian then?" Dumbledore's eyes twinkled dangerously again. Oh he couldn't be- he really- no!

How could he even think of something like that? He was the most unqualified person for this! "Why don't we take this conversation to your office Headmaster?" he hissed. He didn't want Potter to hear what he was about to say.

Getting Potter off of his lap was harder than expected. The little brat kicked his legs and held onto his robes with a grip that a 4 year

old definitely should not possess. "Harry, let go. I'll be back later." was he going to come back after? He wasn't sure.

"No Sev'us! No! No go! Hawwy good." Harry sobbed out, sounding unsure of his last statement as Severus was trying to get Harry to let go. Prying Harry's fingers off his robe as Harry struggled to hold on.

He turned to Poppy. "Some help would be greatly appreciated."

Poppy knew what Severus was going to say to Dumbledore in his office and was thankful that he wasn't going to say it in front of Harry. That would be disastrous and break his fragile heart. She came over and gently lifted Harry after Severus had gotten his robe freed and placed him on the bed, leaving her hands there to prevent him from going back to Severus. She knew this was cruel to Harry but it was beneficial, it had to be done if not it would be worse if they had their discussion here instead.

After Harry had been taken care of, he walked out of the infirmary with Dumbledore, trying to not be swayed by the desperate cries behind him of "N-no! No! No! Sev'us no go! No!" as Poppy was struggling to hold the boy down as he squirmed, kicked, fussed and bawled his eyes out while whispering reassurances. He might come back later to check on Potter, just for...Poppy's sake, yes.

Guardianship

"Headmaster, you can't possibly be serious!" Severus snarled. The headmaster seriously thinks that having him take over guardianship would be a good idea!

"My boy, you are most suited for being Harry's guardian. He has taken a liking to you." Dumbledore stated.

"That's not a good enough reason to take the Potter spawn Headmaster!"

"It's only temporary my boy."

The argument continued in similar fashion before it was interrupted by cries that could be heard from the Headmaster's office.

Poppy had been trying to calm the boy but nothing was working. How a toddler have this much energy? If Severus doesn't come back soon then a meltdown might be in order. Deciding that she was just going to go to Severus if he doesn't come back in 5 minutes. The sobbing had become louder and she couldn't handle it anymore.

"Harry." Harry did not notice her talking.

"Harry." she tried, a little louder this time.

"Sev'us! No! Hawwy good pwease." he said, sentence gradually getting lower in volume. Sev'us had been gone for what seemed like forever to Harry. Why did Sev'us leave? Was Harry bad? But Harry did start to notice her talking.

"You're a good boy Harry. I'll take you to Severus okay?"

"Sev'us come back? Hawwy sowwy."

"We'll go find him. Do you want that?"

"See Sev'us? No weave?"

"Severus hasn't left yet Harry. He's still in the castle."

"R-reawwy?"

"Yes, really. Let go find him shall we?"

"Mhm." Maybe the woman wasn't so bad after all. She was going to take him to find Sev'us! The woman helped Harry get off the beds when she saw Harry struggling and they started walking to the Headmaster's office.

The woman had wanted to hold his hand but the action caused Harry to flinch and back away from her slightly. "I'm just going to hold your hand Harry. Is that ok?"

He didn't really want anyone touching him right now so he shook his head. The closer he was to someone, the easier it was for them to hit him but Sev'us was different. Sev'us was safe, he wouldn't do that.

"That's ok. Just stay close to me alright? It's a big place." Harry nodded.

Knocking was heard at the door when they were arguing. Severus knew that Potter was there as well so he needed to ease his temper. Letting his rage cease, he opened the door as the Headmaster had asked.

The door creaked and opened. A sobbing Harry immediately reached out to Severus. Extending his arms out beseechingly, pleading look in his eyes. It hadn't been that long has it? He had only left Potter with Poppy for a while.

"Sev'us, up pwease?" he said in a small voice. At least Potter had some manners.

Silently, he picked Potter up from the stone floor where he stood. The child wrapped both his arms around his neck, making sure that nobody could take him away. His neck was getting damp with tears but he found that he didn't mind it that much. He knew that the Headmaster was watching his every move with Potter.

"Hello Harry. What brings you here today, weren't you supposed to stay in the infirmary?" Severus aske
"Hawwy sowwy. No hit pwease! Miss you." Dumbledore looked at Severus knowingly.

"Calm yourself. It's alright Harry, I won't hurt you."

It felt real coming from Sev'us that he won't hurt him. Sev'us's hold was gentle and calming. His thumb had made his way into his mouth during the ordeal.

"Severus, you will be a wonderful guardian." Dumbledore said.

Severus kept his mouth shut. Potter was probably already emotionally unstable, he didn't need to make it worse with his blunt words.

"Fine." he scowled. Poppy was highly amused. She had never seen Severus remotely dare she say, fatherly before. The Potion Master was not known for his affection but quite the opposite.

Carrying Harry on his hip, he went back to his quarters. In front of his door was a box labeled 'Harry's things'. So the Headmaster had planned this after all. He even delivered toddler items to his chambers.

Picking up the box with his free hand, he walked through the door. He was going to place Harry on the couch but he fussed, doing everything he could to cling to him.

"Just for a while Harry."

"No! No down! No!" Sev'us was going to leave again if he put him down. He needed to be in his arms constantly to prevent that from happening.

"Stop the screaming Harry. You're going to sit there while I look through this box." Severus was getting irritated. The screaming was threatening to let out his previous anger. What happened to being quiet and reserved?

Severus placed Potter on the couch, turning a blind eye towards the

protest. He was not going to deal with a brat. Coddling certainly won't help.

"Pwease, up."

"After I open the box. Stay there." Why was Sev'us being so mean? He had held him just now. Was it not-Santa that made him a meanie? He was caring before he had to talk with not-Santa.

The box was filled with everything a 2 year old needed. From toys to sippy cups to nappies, it was packed with things. Glaring at the idea of having to change Potter's nappies. That was not happening, Potter better be able to use the bathroom.

True to his promise, he did lift the child back up after he was done with the box. He gave Harry a tour of his quarters and left the box there for later.

"This is my bedroom. You're not allowed to enter unless it is something important." Severus carried Potter to the entrance of his potion lab.

"This is the potion lab. Under no circumstances should you be in here at any time. There are many dangerous ingredients in it. If I catch you inside, there'll be serious repercussions. You do not want to find out what they are." Potter nodded. He hoped Potter had understood what he said but still warded his lab just in case. He was not going to have his lab ruined.

He walked to the unoccupied guest room. "Lastly, this is your bedroom. You will be sleeping here during your stay in my quarters." The room had light grey walls, twinkling stars on the ceiling that was definitely the Headmaster's doing, a bed with light grey covers to match the walls. Potter bounced in his arms in excitement at the words.

"Calm down Harry."

Seems like the Headmaster has also taken liberty in decorating and furnishing Potter's room. Thankfully, there was no Gryffindor colours found anywhere. That would not have gone over well.

Harry was shocked! He got his *own* room! His own room! This is amazing! "Sowwy. Dis Hawwy's woom?" he asked, he needed to make sure he was not dreaming.

"Yes. It's your room. You can gawk at it later, we have some rules to discuss." Severus was concerned with Harry's reaction to his own room. Have those stupid muggles always made him stay in the cupboard? Saving that thought for later, he went back to the living room.

Sitting on the couch, he placed Potter in his lap and turned him around to face him. Potter fisted his robe for support.

"Let discuss some rules." Harry continued to look at him, previous excitement gone wiped off of his face.

"They're quite simple. First, no lying. That will not be tolerated. Second, no shouting. Third, ask if you require something. Fourth, listen to me at all times. Breaking any of these rules will result in punishment, do you understand?"

"Huwt Hawwy?"

"I will not hurt you. You will however stand in the corner, a time out, if you were to disobey these rules."

These rules were so simple! Not like any of the ones at his Aunt and Uncle's house. He was going to be a good boy for Sev'us so he didn't have to do the time-out but it was so much better than getting beaten.

Severus had no time to react as Potter threw himself onto him. Hugging him tightly, not sure where the affection came from, he tentatively wrapped an arm around Potter's back to reciprocate the hug.

Dependence

Severus sat on the couch with the box on the floor before beside him while Harry was nestled in his lap, snuggling into him. He reached into the box with calloused hands and took out the toys inside.

He had to give Harry something to entertain himself with while he prepared for his next potions class. Minerva had also insisted that he and Harry head to the Great Hall for dinner so that Harry could have some interaction with other people therefore he had to also give Harry a bath and dress him in new clothes. They're definitely going to diagon alley as early as possible.

Severus hated having meals in the Great Hall. It was always filled with loud and annoying dunderheads. He could not even have a remotely good time consuming his food. The staff and teachers always had things to share about their personal life or students. He for one, didn't care. It was an exasperating experience every time.

Severus silently groaned. They still had plenty of time until dinner so he showed one of the toys inside the box to Harry, planning to let him indulge in something fun while he was busy before bathing him. It was a muggle remote control race car. Bright red and all, gold stripes across its sides and front. The Headmaster really had to get things Gryffindor coloured. Now he had spurts of red and gold sprinkled around his monotone coloured quarters.

"Cwar!" Harry exclaimed in awe before realising what he had done, immediately apologising,

"Sowwy! No mean to!" shrinking into himself, preparing to get beaten.

"It's alright Harry. You can play with these toys here while I work. Preferably for an hour or two." Severus, placed the car on the couch and pointed at the array of toys on the carpeted floor, left arm snaking around Harry's back and rubbing it, attempting to calm him

down after noticing how tense he was. He had already Potter proofed his quarters so it should be perfectly fine to leave him in the living room for a while. Harry glanced at the different items on the floor and blinked, confused and surprised eyes met onyx ones.

"Hawwy pway?" Sounding doubtful.

"Yes. You'll entertain yourself until I'm done working."

"Sev'us no stay? Sev'us weaving?" Harry panicked. Sev'us can't leave! What if he never comes back?

"Don't these toys look...interesting? It'll only be for a while." Severus struggled to find a word to describe the absurd choice of toys.

"You can find me in my bedroom study if necessary." Severus continued.

"H-hawwy no pway. G-go wif you p-pwease?"

Harry has shed tears way too many times to count in one day. Apparently, alone time was going to be a rare occurrence at this rate. Severus unwillingly compromised. He still needed Harry to be distracted after all. He was not going to be interrupted while preparing his lesson materials.

"How about you play on the carpet while I get work done on the couch?"

"S-Sev'us stay?" Severus made a side note to himself that he should get Harry to work on saying his name correctly even though it sounds mildly cute. Wait. What did I just say? Cute? Severus, get it together! He is not cute!

"You'll be able to see me from your position while you play." Face blank despite the internal conflict he just had.

"I'll get my materials. Stay there." Severus said as he lifted Harry off his lap and onto the soft carpet. Harry's expression looked anxious and scared at being left alone, even if it was only for a few moments. Severus strode to retrieve his materials in record speed, Harry didn't even have the chance to follow him although he was

preparing to stand. He sat back down when Severus came into view again. Severus had to get Harry to be more independent. He was already 4 years old. Maybe work on his speech as well.

Stop! Stop! Stop! Why do I have the thought that I'll need to do those things?! This is temporary Severus! Temporary! Having a child in his quarters was most definitely messing with his mind. Yeah. That was it.

Harry faced towards Severus as he drove the red remote control car around. Making tiny 'vroom' sounds as he controlled the vehicle to drive in circles. Originally, he had trouble with the buttons but with a little guidance from Severus, he got the hang of it quickly.

Half an hour passed with Harry peaking up at Severus several times to check that he hasn't left. Severus also glanced at Harry a few times as he was marking potion essays. Not without noticing that Harry had only been playing with the same exact toy since the beginning. Surely he must be sick of it already.

When Severus and Harry made eye contact while they checked up on each other, Severus stopped his marking momentarily and decided to ask,

"Don't you want to play with something else? Surely that must be quite boring."

"Hawwy can pway other toys?"

Oh. Harry didn't even think that he was allowed to play with other things. He had probably assumed that the remote control toy car was the only thing he was allowed because that's what Severus offered to him earlier.

"Harry, you can play with the other toys. Not only the car."

"Weawwy? No lie wight? Hawwy pway with other toys?" Had his relatives tricked him into getting punished?

"Yes. You can. In fact, it would be preferred."

"Fank 'ou Sev'us!" Harry felt like he was dreaming. He had all these

toys he could have fun with! Sev'us is so nice, letting a disgusting freak like himself touch these toys.

"Why did you ask if I was lying?" Severus wanted to know what happened with Harry and his relatives. It would give him a good gauge on what he should do to them should they have the joy of meeting.

"No say."

"Why not? You can tell me."

"Auntie and Unco say no say."

"They wouldn't know what you said to me ok?"

"Auntie and Unco scawy and mean. Huwt Hawwy. Lie to Hawwy. Make Hawwy have owies."

"Did they hurt you a lot?" Severus further questioned.

"Mhm. Auntie and Unco huwt a wot."

"Does anything still hurt Harry?"

"Nofin huwt anymwore." Harry said, giving Severus a small smile.

"That's good. I'll be done soon."

The comforting silence went on for another hour before Severus marked all of the potion essays. Their grades were less than satisfactory but he didn't have time to ponder about that. Harry had to have a bath.

A/N:
My hand is currently very sunburned right now so chapters will be quite slow. School camps suck lol. Probably going to have more fluff in the next chapter.

Interactions

Getting Harry to take a bath was much harder than Severus had anticipated. Harry was now throwing a tantrum about a simple bath,

"No baf! N-no baf! No baf p-pwease no!" could be heard protested throughout his quarters.

"It's merely a bath Harry. Stop your tantrum right now." Severus ordered.

"No! No! No! Baf huwt w-wots! No wike!" Desperate tears flooded big green eyes.

"It's not supposed to Harry." Severus's tone softened, moving to kneel on the floor on one leg in front of him.

"No w-wike! Baf hot! Baf b-bad!" tears were falling down his pink cheeks and onto the carpet.

"I'll make the bath a suitable temperature Harry. You can even test the water before you get in."

"N-no hot? No h-huwt?"

"Harry, look at me." Severus waited for his command to be followed before realising that Harry was not going to comply. Severus sighed as he lifted Harry's chin slightly before continuing,

"I won't ever hurt you. Your relatives were not acceptable people, do you understand?" His free hand gently wiped the tears still streaming down Harry's face.

"Auntie Unco bad?"

"Yes. They are the worst kind of people Harry. Let's go take a nice bath shall we?" Severus changed the subject. Time was slowly ticking during Harry's little objection. They had to speed up if they

were going to make it to dinner in time.

"O-ok. Up p-pwease?" voice barely audible, raising his hands up towards Severus.

Severus should prevent his habit of wanting to be carried everywhere soon. Walking would be beneficial for the both of them. Severus gave in to the toddler in the end. Those eyes were hard to resist.

Severus had not carried any child before this but he was already getting used to the motion. That was just a little concerning. Severus picked him up, arms supporting his back and legs as he stood up himself, swiftly grabbing a few items from the box before heading for the bathroom. He could feel Harry resuming his previous position in his arms as Harry hid in the crook of his neck. Both arms around his neck yet again.

Letting Harry back on the floor upon entering the bathroom, he dragged a small wooden stool in the corner to the side of the bathtub and sat down. Turning on the tap and filling the rarely used bathtub to a reasonable height for Harry.

Harry tried to climb onto Severus's lap as soon as he was set down. He was lacking physical touch and Severus's had been the only one he was comfortable with. Holding Severus's robes, he attempted to pull himself up with all the strength he had. It did not work. He then resorted to giving Severus the puppy eyes.

Severus did notice the puppy eyes that Harry was giving him but did not give in this time. The tub was almost done filling anyways. He guided Harry's hand towards the water and gestured for him to feel it. Small hands touched the water surface, still disappointed by the fact that Severus did not accept his silent request.

A wave of his wand and Harry's clothes were spelled off of him. He quickly put Harry into the bathtub. Opening the bottle of chidren's shampoo that he found in the box, he squeezed some of the oddly vibrant blue liquid onto his palms and lathered it on Harry's unruly hair. Harry melted into the contact.

"Lean your head back. I'm going to rinse your hair."

Pouring scoops of water from a cup over the mop of hair, making sure that no soapy water went into Harry's eyes. He proceeded to wash Harry's body as well.

Severus finished bathing Harry and took Harry out of the bathtub, immediately wrapping a fluffy towel around him to prevent him from getting cold. After Harry was dry, he Accioed one of his own black shirts and pants, transfiguring it into Harry's size and spelled it on him.

"We're going to have dinner in the Great Hall. There will be many people present, will you be fine?" Severus asked as he ushered Harry back to the living room.

"Sev'us stay?"

"You will be sitting beside me." Severus clarified.

"Mhm"

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There were not a lot of people there when Severus stepped in to the Great Hall carrying Harry. Severus had wanted to be a little early so that Harry could get familiar with the place before the hordes of students rushed in.

Severus could felt that Harry tensed right after he saw the amount of people in the Great Hall. Although there were only teachers occupying the room at the moment, Harry was still nervous. Harry had moved one of his arms to grip Severus's robes instead.

Severus went to the teacher's table, detached Harry's grip on his robes and placed him on a chair beside him, sitting down himself. Most of the staff stopped their conversations midway and stared bewildered at him, shocked at the sight of a child accompanying him. They didn't even know that he was the Boy-Who-Lived yet. Severus smirked. Minerva and Dumbledore both gave him a knowing look however.

There was loads of food on the table. Plates of roast beef, chicken and ham sandwiches, shepard's pie were visible on the large table. Harry was looking at all the mouth watering dishes, excitement filling his eyes despite the nervousness. He still had a grip on Severus's robes after he was sat on the chair though.

Severus picked up a fork on the table and stabbed a fairly big chunk of roast beef and set it on Harry's plate, cutting it up into bite size pieces. He then took the fork that was beside Harry's plate and gave it to him. He needed to learn how to use cutlery sooner or later.

Harry stared at the fork in confusion. Several seconds later, Severus had thought that maybe Harry would get the idea of how to use the utensil after seeing him do it first but that did not happen, he decided to help.

Severus reached his empty hand out and wrapped it around Harry's smaller one, holding the fork, he led Harry's hand to the plate and picked up a piece of roast beef before letting go of Harry's hand.

Harry got the hint and put the roast beef in his mouth, eyes sparkling slightly when he realised how delicious it was. He turned to face Severus in hopes of getting more.

The professors were watching this happen with their own eyes. They couldn't believe it. The scary potion master was firstly, accompanied by a child, secondly, he was feeding said child. How did this happen? Also, why does the boy seem weirdly familiar?

Severus glanced at the astounded faces of his colleagues and barely held back a smug look. Not long after, the shock gradually disappeared and morphed into looks of fondness.

"Who's this little one you got there Severus?" Flitwick asked.

Severus was interested in how they would react when they found out his identity. After catching Harry's attention he asked,

"Why don't you introduce yourself?" Severus prompted. Harry moved a little closer to Severus and gripped Severus's robes slightly tighter.

"H-hewwo. M'Hawwy." Harry's social skills need some work.

Practically all the professor's gaped at the same time. Perhaps this Great Hall experience would not be that dreadful. The shock lasted longer than before. Soon, they noticed that two of the staff there were not surprised, Minerva and Dumbledore.

"Well h-hello there Harry, I'm Professor Flitwick." He stuttered out, not quite over the shock yet.

"H-hewwo 'fessor Fitwit" Flitwick let out a soft chuckle at Harry's pronunciation of his name.

All the professors introduced themselves one at a time, each followed by Harry saying "Hewwo 'fessor" and a horrible pronunciation of their name. It was quite endearing. The real chaos has yet to come. One by one, students flooded the Great Hall.

A/N: I finally finished the chapter after having it in my drafts unfinished for a while so that's cool. My sunburn is getting better so I might be getting a new chapter done faster. Not very sure tho.

Concerns

All the tables filled up eventually. Almost everyone had been stunned when they saw the potions professor with a child, as expected. The students had broke out into curious chatter.

"Is that a child beside Professor Snape!?" "Does Professor Snape have a child?"
"What the bloody hell! Is that Professor Snape?"

Severus felt Harry squirm beside him, clearly uncomfortable with the noise.

"Sev'us? Woud, scawy." Harry had put down the fork while his hands started to make its way to his ears, trying his best to block out the noise.

Severus saw the opportunity and took it.

"It is rather loud. Why don't we head back to my quarters then? We shall have the rest of the dinner there."

"Yesh pwease" Finally, Severus could escape from this hell hole they call a dinner.

Harry raised his arms on instinct. Severus did not want to ruin his image yet and simply lifted him from the chair and onto the floor. He motioned for Harry to follow him out of the Great Hall.

"We will be having dinner in my quarters." Severus announced simply to the staff table and left with Harry. Harry walked beside Severus, disappointment evident on his tiny face, practically leaning into the man.

After the pair made their way out of the student's and staff's view, Severus hefted Harry into his arms. A surprised yelp exited from Harry's mouth before nuzzling into Severus's neck.

Making his way back to his quarters, thankful that no student of his

saw his current state, carrying a child. Harry was nodding off by the time it took to go back.

"Harry." Severus said, voice gentle, shocking himself at the tone. He never even knew he could talk in this manner, uncharacteristically gentle.

Harry stirred but otherwise did nothing.

"Harry, wake up. You have yet to finish eating dinner."

Harry whined but awoke, rubbing his eyes sleepily as he was being carried to the kitchen. He rested his head on Severus's shoulder, trying not to fall asleep again.

Severus had asked Dobby to deliver the rest of the food on Harry's plate to a ceramic plate on his kitchen counter. Figuring that Harry would most likely not be awake enough to eat by himself, he settled on feeding him to avoid a mess.

Holding the plate, he carried it to Harry's room. He set the plate onto the wooden bedside table and sat down with Harry on his lap.

"Just a few more bites and you can go to sleep."

Harry lazily nodded not fully aware of what's going on. Severus fed Harry a few spoonfuls of mashed potato and a few bites of beef just like he said. Placing Harry on the plain white bedsheets, he *Accioed* his old night shirt, black of course, did the usual spells before fitting it on him.

Shifting Harry to a more comfortable position, he laid him down and pulled the covers over the child before leaving the room silently.

Now, he had a new problem to solve. What was he going to do with Harry during his classes? He also had to take Harry to Diagon Alley tomorrow to buy some clothes and new glasses. He just hoped that nobody was going to get detention in his class. Unfortunately, he would not be able to carry out his usual detention assigning routine due to his circumstances.

'Maybe Minerva or the Headmaster could watch Harry while they were free.' That could work. Severus floo called the Headmaster.

It was answered in the first few rings.

"Hello Severus. What has you calling me at this time?"

"I would like to have Harry stay with you during my classes. I will **not** have him in my class while I teach."

"I suppose that can be arranged. Come to my office tomorrow morning and we'll see what we can do although I think this may not work out."

"It's a reasonable idea Headmaster. There's not much that could go wrong."

"We'll see. Goodnight Severus, see you tomorrow."

"Goodnight Headmaster."

A/N: Sorry for the slow update. Totally forgot that my exams are coming lol. Chapters are going to be shorter then usual but that might be a permanent change since it's easier to think and write shorter chapters :)

p.s: the titles are gonna be more straightforward and less creative cuz of the short chapters

Chapter 11 (aka ran out of title names)

A/N: quick disclaimer: i hv no idea what i'm doing

Sunlight illuminated the room, seeping through the windows. Severus opened his eyes slowly, blinded by the brightness and blinking a few times before getting his bearings.

He got up and silently went to check up on Harry, not really sure where he got the urge from.

Harry was sprawled on top of the covers, his legs angled in a less than comfortable position. Severus took pity on him and carefully slid an arm underneath his back and legs, adjusting Harry to a better position. Pulling the covers to his neck before quietly stepping out.

Severus prepared another set of transfigured clothes for Harry and placed them beside the sink in the bathroom.

Emerging from the shower with a towel around his neck, he put on his usual teaching robes, putting the towel back and went to wake Harry up. With his robes dramatically flowing behind him, he entered the room and neared Harry's bedside.

A thumb could be seen lodged between Harry's lips as he turned on his side, curled up on himself, legs drawn up against his chest. Severus felt his heart constrict a bit at the adorable sight. Goddamnit Severus!! You are saying that word again! A sigh came from Severus, annoyed at himself.

"Harry." Severus firmly said. He was a little more snappy in the mornings. Harry made no move to get up.

"Harry, wake up." More impatient this time.

Not yet conscious enough to remember where he was or what happened, Harry automatically muttered,"Hawwy sowwy. Hawwy sowwy. Make bweakfast now. No mean to sweep long."

"Harry, you're not at your relatives house. You don't have to cook."

Recognising the deep soothing voice, Harry calmed. "Mornin' Sev'us."

"Good morning Harry."

Harry realised that he urgently needed the bathroom. Like right now! He tried to scramble out of the bed. Severus looked at him curiously and raised a brow. The sudden movement proved to be his downfall when he felt a stream of liquid soaking through his pants and it was too late.

Panic took over Harry's features. Oh no. No no no no no! He'd wet himself. On the bed! Oh no! What was Sev'us going to do? Was he going to lock him in a cupboard for being bad? Now he knew what a bad boy Harry was. Sev'us was going to hate him!

Recognising the look of pure panic on Harry's face, he asked ,"What's wrong?"

Tears leaked out from Harry's eyes, cascading down his reddened cheeks.

"Hawwy sowwy! Pwease! Hawwy sowwy! No mean it. Hawwy cwean it. Sowwy." Came the sobbed out string of apologises.

"What happened?" Severus asked, concerned.

He watched closely as Harry inched off the spot he was sitting on. Severus immediately understood. On the bed was a wet spot and he could now see that Harry's pants was drenched.

"Reawwy twied to make it. Sowwy!" Harry tilted his head down in shame, tears splattering against the mattress. He normally made it on time.

"Accidents happen. You don't have to clean it yourself."

Harry just sobbed harder. He was completely overwhelmed by the kindness that the man was showing him.

Severus watched as Harry cried harder at his words, a little part of him was wanting to reach out and hold Harry in his arms. A soft sigh escaped his lips as he took Harry into his lap, mumbling a cleaning charm on Harry and also the bed before Harry's nightwear made contact with his robes.

Harry leaned into his chest, bawling his eyes out making his robes gradually grow damp with tears, soaking through the material. He placed a gentle hand on Harry's back, rubbing up and down rhythmically. It's definitely too early for this.

The sobs finally died down after a long while.

"Does this happen a lot, Harry?"

Harry shook his head, indicating 'No'.

Well then, that's good news for Severus.

Harry was so comfortable and relaxed in Severus's lap that he only now realised that the wetness from just now disappeared. Huh? Looking down at his pants, they were perfectly normal again, just like before!

Severus looked towards Harry as he stared questioningly at his now dry nightwear, registering the confusion plastered all over his face, morphing into a terrified look in the blink of an eye.

Severus was now puzzled at Harry's response.

"It's just magic." Harry looked more horrified at that.

"No say that! Bad word."

"Magic?" Severus questioned.

Seeing as Severus was so calm about the bad word, Harry loosened his tense shoulders.

"Mhm. Not sup'osed to say." Harry fidgeted with his small fingers, eyes locked on his hands.

"It's not a bad word. Do your relatives not like that word?" Petunia had always held a grudge towards Lily for being magical.

Severus received a tiny nod.

"You can say it here. It's not bad."

Severus received another tiny nod.

The more the Potion Master learned about the the Dursley's, the more inclined he was to risk Azkaban for possible murder.

A/N: I have no idea how to write child characters haha. Actually I don't interact with children in general. Also, I'm aware that I'm all over the place with Harry's speech. I'm very inconsistent when it comes to that.

I know it's been a super long time since I updated but I'm running out of ideas for this fic lol. This is a pretty short chapter sooo, sorry about that. Kinda busy with homework lately. It's a shitty excuse honestly.

Trying to improve my writing skills by writing this fic. I hope it's better now. Feel free to point out mistakes if you see any. Thank you for reading:)

A/N (im probably not abandoning this fic)

Sorry to the ppl that thought this was going to be a new chapter.

Just wanted to say that I probably won't be updating with new chapters (unless i hv a gd chapter idea) until I rewrite some of the chapters I am not happy with.

I don't know when I gonna finish editing it or when I will start editing but it's gonna happen.

This fic is way too unrealistic lol. I can't even read it myself without cringing sometimes.

Not knowing how to improve my writing is really driving me insane as well.

Going to correct and hopefully improve some parts.

Also going to be working on the plot (not that there is one honestly) and coming up with content and ideas.

I know this fic is messy as heck but I blame that on this being my first fanfic.

Anyways, I've been freaking out over the fact that this fic has gotten way more attention than I thought it ever would so that's cool.

Thanks for reading:)

A/N HELLO EVERYONE

Guess who is a 17 yr old looking back at their old fics now😶

Anyways, can't believe this story is still being discovered by people. Im thankful to all my readers even though this fic makes me want to crawl in a hole and never come out.

I really do actually want to continue this fic and believe it or not I still check on this fic sometimes.

As you can see, I stopped updating this fic with the last chap being sorta before a major-ish part.

I was too nervous to write it 💀

My first fic has gotten more attention than I thought it would and I do really wish that I could keep this fic alive and active

Its my holidays now and hopefully a new chap will be coming soon❤□❤□

A/N TRIGGER WARNING: suicide attempt

TRIGGER WARNING: Suicide attempt

2 days ago, i stopped my own mother's suicide attempt. i have never been the same since.

needless to say, my hands haven't stopped shaking after that day.

im sorry, this story will be abandoned.

you might be wondering why i'm sharing this? i just didn't want to randomly contradict my last author's note.

thank you everyone for reading❤